

Comments

Claims 1-4 were all the claims in the case. Claim 1 has been amended and claim 2 has been canceled. Claims 1, 3, and 4 are now all the claims in the case.

Corrected Declaration

The examiner found that the declaration as filed was defective for listing an improper filing date of the priority application. A corrected declaration is submitted herewith.

Objection to the specification

The examiner objected to the specification at page 2, line 26 for referring to "invention principles as defined in claim 1." The specification has been amended and this language no longer appears. This objection has therefore been obviated.

Objection to the drawings

The examiner objected to figure 1 because it included a reference character "2" not mentioned in the description. The specification has been amended at page 2, line 22 to identify the base as element 2 of the drawings, confirming the examiner's understanding.

The examiner objected to the drawings for failing to show the grooves and ribs recited in claim 4. Replacement Sheet 2/4 is submitted herewith where Fig. 2a shows the ribs and grooves described in the specification at page 3, line 9 and recited in claim 4.

Objection to the claims

The examiner objected to claim because there was insufficient antecedent basis for the limitation of "the sleeve." Claim 1 has been amended to recite "a sleeve."

Rejections under § 103

a. The examiner rejected claims 1, 3, and 4 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Bonny WO 02/091863 in view of US Patent 4,761,943 to Parker. This rejection is traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitation found in claim 2, namely that the apertured plate has straight rods. Further, claim 1 has been amended to recite that these rods extend beyond the edge of the apertured plate. Support for this recitation is found in Fig. 4 of the drawings and in the specification at page 3, lines 11-13.

This limitation is not taught or suggested in Bonny '863 or in Parker '943, either alone or taken together. It is therefore submitted that claim 1 as amended, and claims 3 and 4 which are dependent thereon, are patentable over those references.

b. The examiner rejected claim 2 under § 103 as obvious over Bonny '863 and Parker '943 as applied to claim 1, and further in view of EP 0894429 to Petry.

Claim 2 has been canceled and thus this rejection is mooted.

It is noted that claim 1 has been amended to include the straight rod limitation of claim 2. Claim 1 has been further amended to recite that the rods extend beyond the aperture plate. This element is not disclosed or suggested by any of the references cited by the examiner, including the Petry '429 reference cited against claim 2, now canceled. Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 1 as amended is patentable over the references cited by the examiner.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the claims as amended present patentable subject matter and allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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